



# Matthews Station Parking Analysis

## Introduction

As the Matthews Station Street development turns ten this year, its success is evident with the amount of parking demand that occurs on a frequent basis. With the changing dynamics of the area that include the pending relocation of Wingate University, different library hours and the opening of the PURE Taqueria, it is time to reexamine parking supply, demand and management. In many downtown settings, parking woes can be attributed to one of two situations. There may be a true deficiency in the number of spaces, or it simply may be a management issue where resources are not used appropriately.

Through the collection of data on parking usage in the Matthews Station area, the Planning Department has formulated this brief report complete with usage trends and suggestions for how to manage parking in this part of the Town. Our methodology, given the short time frame of the study, has been to take sample parking counts from key areas in and around Matthews Station Street. Parking counts change from morning to evening, month to month and season to season and this report provides just a snapshot of June/July 2010. It is important to remember that above all, a parking problem is a good thing! Many downtowns struggle to attract people while here in Matthews Downtown is a popular destination.

## Current Conditions

Matthews Station Street was created through a public/private partnership with Lat Purser to oversee the redevelopment of critical land in the heart of the downtown area. Along this new public street, development lots were created on both sides and in front of the new Town Green. After development of the Town Hall/Library building and the initial retail/office buildings, two Town-owned building pads remained. The fact that all buildings were not constructed initially points to the fact that the area is developing in a true Downtown fashion and is maturing with new construction over time.

The renovation of the Clark House and new uses associated with it coupled with the addition of PURE Taqueria on one of the building pads creates the appearance of a two-fold parking dilemma. Prior to construction at these sites, the pavement behind the Clark house served as an unofficial public parking lot and was frequently used by office workers in the Johnson building and patrons of Kristopher's. This area will now be reserved for use by both the Clark House and PURE, both of which will create additional parking demands in the area. There is also now less available parking for the Johnson building next door as a result. Since the development of Matthews Station, parking has been unrestricted with no time limits, permits or metering. The dynamics of parking demand in a Downtown are fluid, meaning that with every new use or building, different parking patterns may evolve. When Wingate University moves to Wingate Commons, those dynamics will change yet again. If an office use moves into that space, there may be more demand for long term parking during the day. At night, there could be less strain on parking.

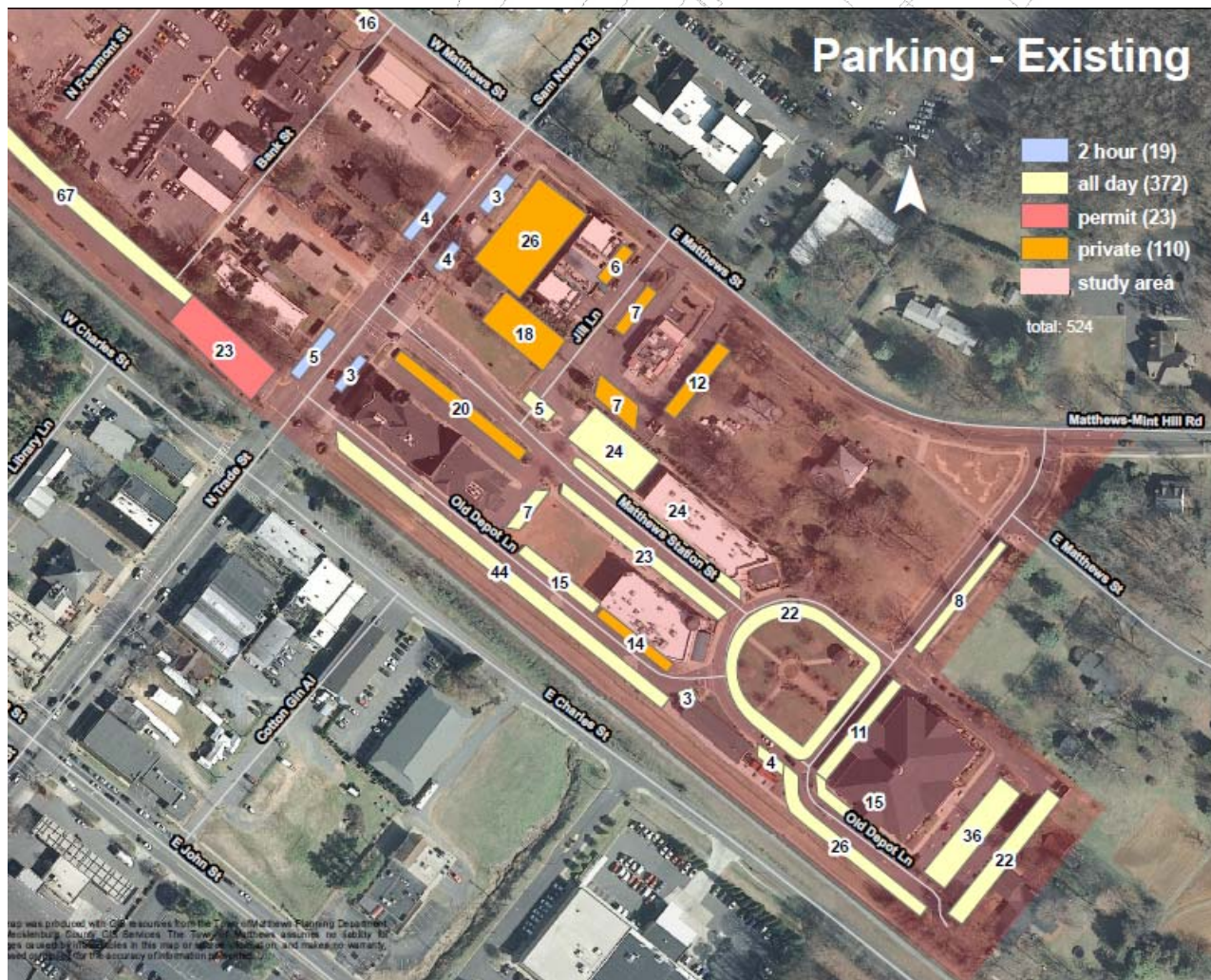


Based on recent studies, the most convenient public parking in the area is often at capacity around lunchtime and is near capacity in the evenings. The railroad parking lot across Trade Street (90 spaces) continues to be a seldom used asset that could alleviate some of the problem by providing long term parking. Once the PURE building is complete and the Clark House occupied, there will be approximately 93,202 sq ft of developed space in Matthews Station. With 335 available parking spaces, this yields a blended parking ratio of about 1 to 278. Standard parking requirements outside of Downtown range from 1 per 200 sq ft for most retail and restaurant uses to 1 per 300 sq ft for office uses. These statistics include the spaces behind the Town Hall/Library, but not private spaces available at the Johnson Building and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

#### **Matthews Station Square Footage**

Town Hall/Library:	32,000
Depot Building:	23,020
Town Square Building:	17,800
Main Street Building:	14,682
PURE Taqueria:	3,900
Clark House:	1,800
<b>Total:</b>	<b>93,202 sq ft</b>

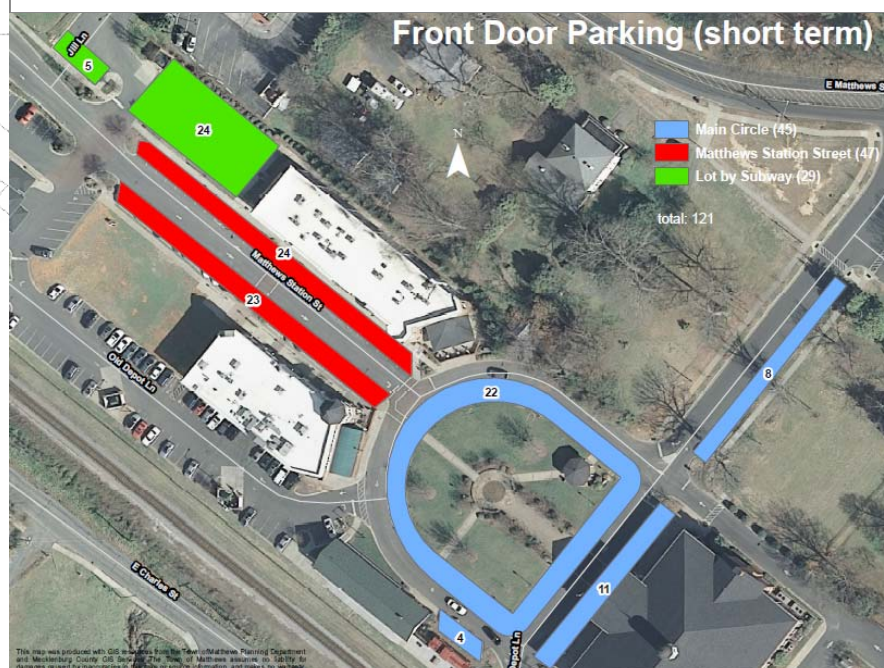
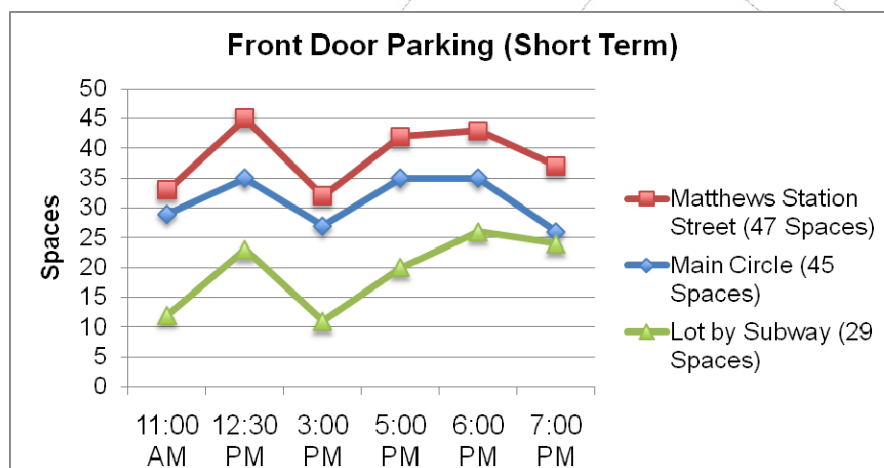
*\* Development of the final building pad as currently designed would add 14,952 square feet of building area. This number is subject to change based on market conditions and building design*



## Trends and Usage Analysis: Survey Area 1

The parking spaces surveyed in the following graph were those that are generally perceived to be the most convenient in and around Matthews Station Street. These are the spaces that are typically the closest straight line walking distance from vehicle to building entrance.

The Matthews Station parking area in this graph consists of the on-street spaces along Matthews Station St., the lot adjacent to the Subway restaurant, and the main parking circle but not including rear overflow parking behind Town Hall. (see map) Data collected over a period of 9 weekdays presents a peak occupancy rate for parking around noon. The number of available spaces nearly reaches the maximum capacity each day, especially along the main retail street, which becomes full at least once during this peak period. In the evening, a moderate rise in occupancy due to dinner traffic overburdens parking availability a second time. Observations also conclude that for each of the three areas 6-10 cars on average remain in a spot for more than 2 ½ hours daily. These vehicles may be second floor office traffic or employees of the surrounding businesses.

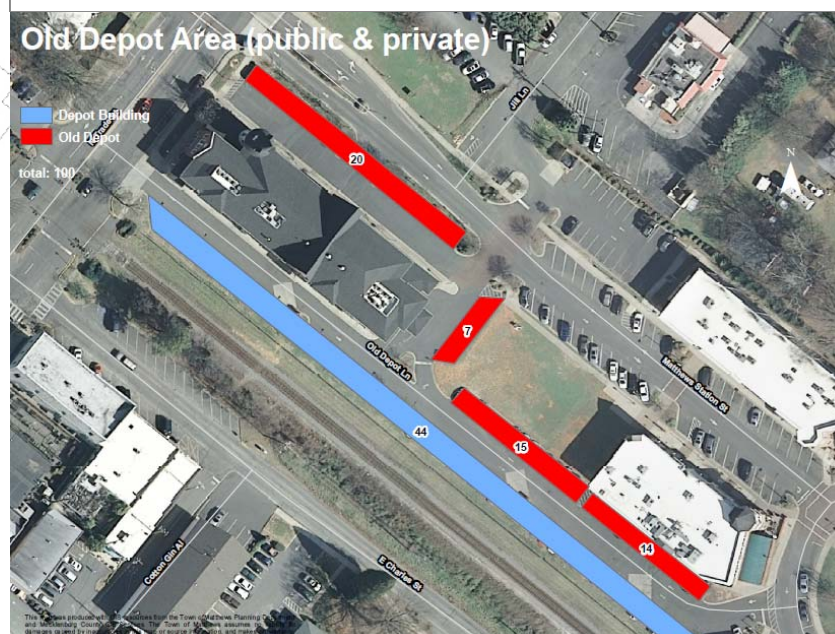
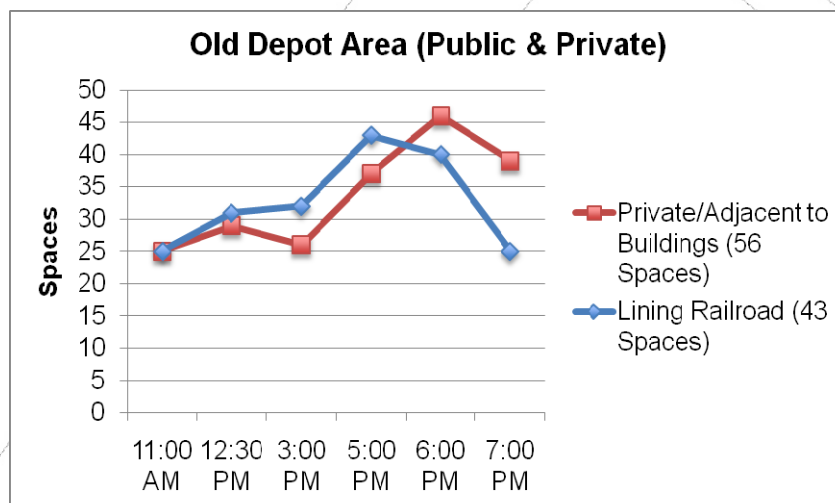




## Trends and Usage Analysis: Survey Area 2

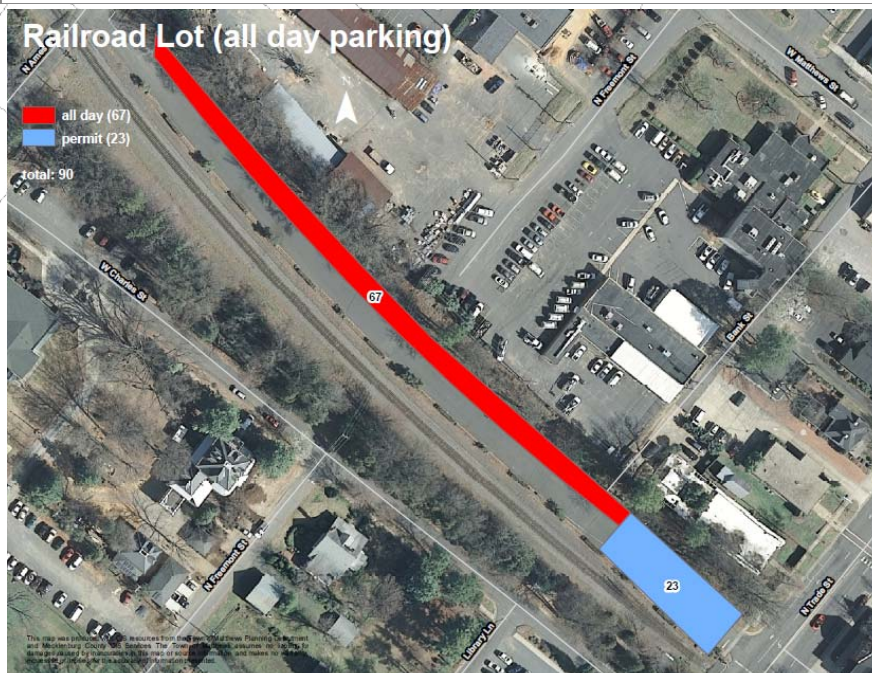
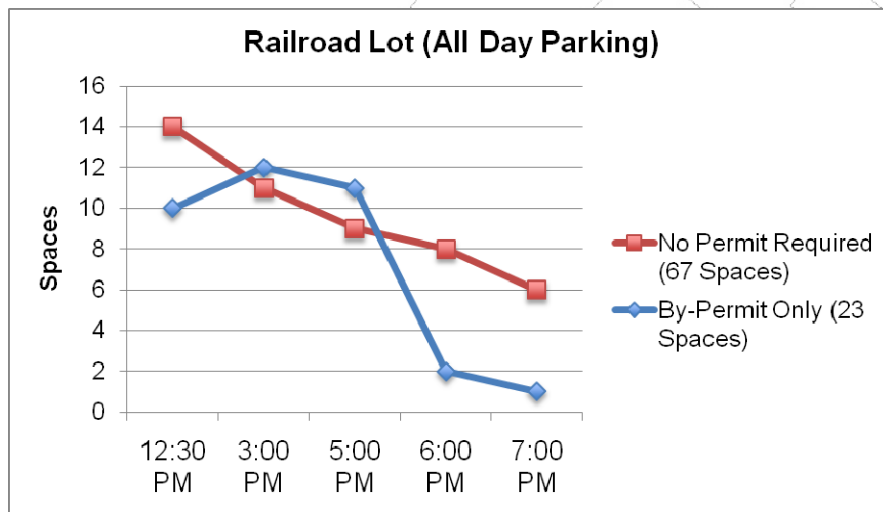
Old Depot Lane accommodates long term parking for business owners and their employees. Parking in front of the Depot building and behind the Main Street building are privately owned. The full row of spaces along Old Depot Lane facing the railroad track are public and the ones adjacent to the vacant lot are subject to change when development occurs.

Observations do conclude the utilization of these spaces by the employee population along the retail strip. The 17 spaces behind the Depot Building, along the train tracks are consistently full with repeat traffic by noon daily. Parking past this building on Old Depot Lane also reflects large numbers of consistent and repeat traffic. Front and side parking around this building provides for retail only private spaces; however, consistencies are found in smaller numbers of 2-3 cars parking for longer periods of time. Data can provide evidence of this being a minor problem until the evening hours when students arrive for class and both parking areas reach about full capacity, in fact, pushing traffic to parking spaces along the main retail strip or the lot beside Subway.



## Trends and Usage Analysis: Survey Area 3

Permit and public parking across Trade St. from Old Depot Lane appears to not be sufficiently utilized during both the afternoon or evening hours. Although 24 parking permits have been purchased data provides the maximum number of spots occupied through out the week being in the range of 12-13. Additionally, the 67 public parking spots further down the lot are never higher than a 22% occupancy with almost every car being consistent each day. These spaces must be utilized to the highest extent for they are a large part of the answer to the Matthews Station parking problem. This lot also has an ever changing parking demand as evidenced during the high gas prices in 2007 and 2008. Once gas reached a high of \$4/gallon, CATS ridership exploded as people chose public transit to save money. Between the current recession and lower fuel prices, this lot is once again not used as much as it could be. For the time being while Wingate is still located in Downtown, this lot offers convenient parking for students so that in the evenings Matthews Station has more parking availability.



## Summary and Recommendations

After thorough analysis of usage trends and site characteristics, it is apparent that the Matthews Station area of Downtown does provide adequate parking based on the amount of developed space and the amount of available parking. With a blended parking ratio of 1 space per 278 sq ft of floor area in Matthews Station proper, the area is parked at a level similar to most suburban developments and well above most traditional downtown areas.

In summary, better management of this valuable resource is the most cost effective and logical approach to solving parking issues. It is important to remember that people do not visit a place simply because parking is free and abundant. They visit because there are important destinations and hopefully, because downtown is a place they want to spend time in. Simply adding more parking does nothing for the true appeal of Downtown. Creating a quality pedestrian environment with block fronts full of buildings and storefronts is critical. Parking areas contribute little to the built environment and do little to encourage pedestrians to walk further. Studies have shown that pedestrians will walk longer distances when a quality urban environment is present. For Matthews Station Street to continue to thrive as a destination within Downtown, the last building pad should be reserved for a building as originally planned.

As a rule in most cities, there is a divide between short and long term parking. Long term parking must be provided for all day users and is generally not the most convenient. Short term parking, on the other hand, should be reserved for visitors who generally come and go throughout the day. These visitors could be patronizing any sort of establishment whether it be a law office, a salon or a restaurant. Parking turnover is key. Although CATS serves the Downtown area, the fact remains that the majority of people who visit Downtown will continue to arrive via motor vehicle.

While the Town should continue to evaluate the need for additional public parking in the future, it is most logical today to improve management and make improvements rather than seek to increase supply. The following list is a summary of actions the Town could implement through a three prong approach to ease parking woes and ensure that Downtown continues to be a thriving destination. By amending existing parking regulations, beginning a PR campaign and implementing a valet parking ordinance, Downtown parking could be more plentiful to visitors.

## Three Prong Approach

### **1. Regulatory Changes and Street Improvements**

#### **A) 2 hour parking limit for Matthews Station St including parking around the green and the public lot beside Subway. (See map on page 10)**

Matthews Station is a public street with street level retail and should function just as North Trade Street does with 2 hour parking limits designed to ensure space turnover. Retail, office and restaurant uses as well as the Library would benefit from the additional spaces that would be freed up as a result. It is recommended that the entire parking circle be included.

#### **B) Signs and Pavement markings**

- Pedestrian crossings near Thai Taste and the Chamber could be added for safety and better pedestrian movement.
- Either “no parking” signs or yellow curb paint may be added at the crosswalk areas between The Green and the restaurants and The Green and Town Hall.
- The last on-street spaces in front of Beantown and Thai Taste should be designated “compact only” due to their shallow depth. Oversized vehicles often park in these spaces creating traffic problems.
- There are often a number of cars parked illegally on Jill Lane between the Johnson Building and Kristophers. Either this area should be formally designated for on-street parking or “no parking” signs should be posted. The KFC restaurant property extends partially into Jill Lane which could complicate the addition of formal on-street parking. Curb extensions behind the Johnson Building could create space for on-street parking on that side of Jill Lane.
- The on-street parking on West Matthews is often underutilized and could benefit from a fresh coat of paint.

### **2. Valet Parking Ordinance**

If implemented by restaurants valet parking would add an additional tool for solving parking issues by moving cars to underutilized lots on the perimeter and away from congested parking near key destinations. An ordinance is under development and will be provided to Town Board in the coming weeks.



### 3. Public Relations Campaign

#### A) Parking Brochure/Flyer with Map

As part of a public information campaign, a parking brochure and map should be posted online as well as distributed to Downtown business owners and visitors. The message? The best parking spaces should & are reserved for customers! Traffic flow and parking will function better if repeat visitors know where to park.

#### B) Create a parking signage system for the entire downtown area

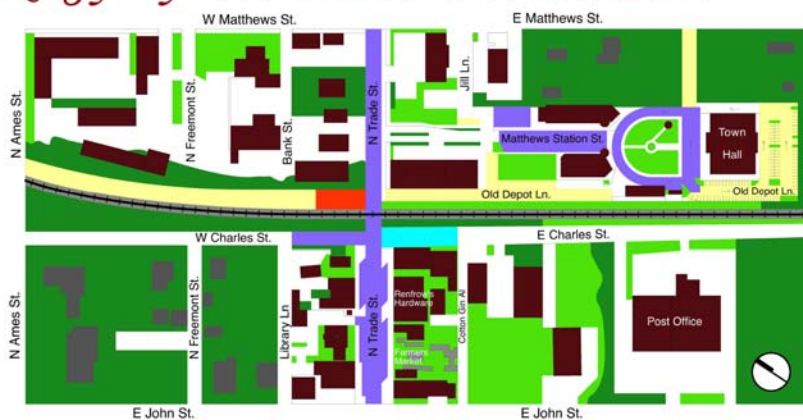
A uniform parking signage program would better inform the public regarding their options for parking in downtown. Although some signage currently exists, it is difficult to read and too small in many cases. Examples are given on the following pages. This could be implemented as part of the broad Wayfinding Program the Town will develop over the next two years. (See Sign Illustrations on page 12)

#### C) Private Sector Participation

Educate and encourage Downtown business owners and their employees to be sensitive to customer and client preferences for the most convenient parking spaces. This would be a peer to peer ongoing effort.

### *We have reserved parking for you in Downtown Matthews!*

- Over 500 FREE parking spaces in downtown
- Hourly and permit parking enforced 8 AM to 5 PM Monday - Friday
- All-day and short-term (2 hr and 3 hr) parking is available in the downtown area
- Hourly parking is implemented to ensure an adequate turnover of spaces for your convenience



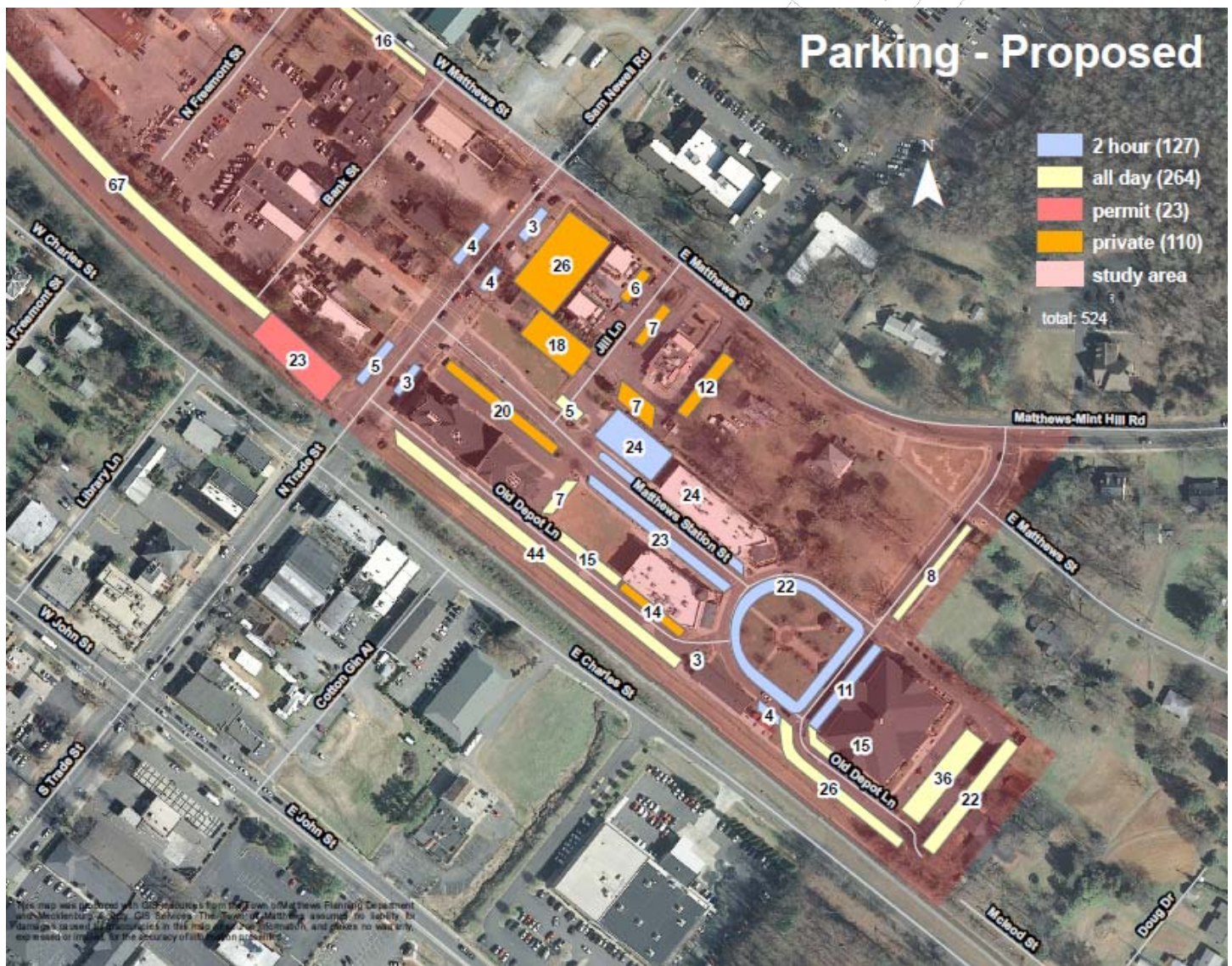
2 hr

All Day

3 hr

Permit

Sample Flyer







*Illegal Parking Along Jill Lane*

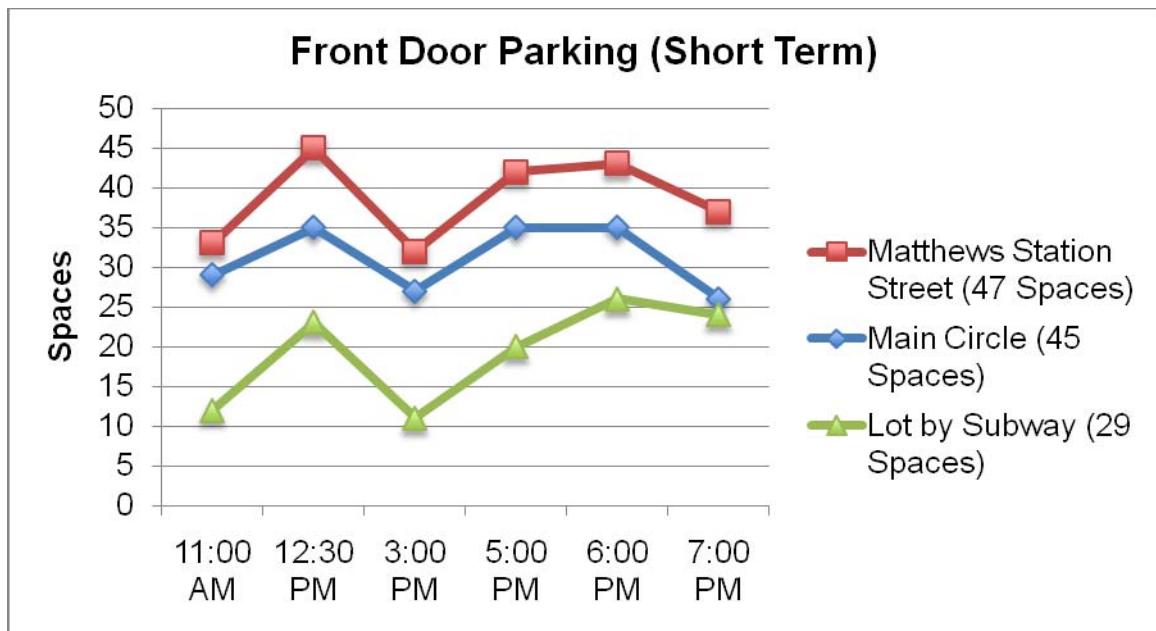


*April 2010 Aerial Imagery of Jill Lane*



## Improved Signage Opportunities





Main  
Circle

	11:00 AM	12:30 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	Consistent
8-Jun-10	29		26				4
9-Jun-10	26		33				4
11-Jun-10	33		30				6
15-Jun-10		39	29				5
16-Jun-10		41	33				6
17-Jun-10		28	18				
22-Jun-10		36	34	39	43	36	
23-Jun-10		44	34	31	27	16	
24-Jun-10		20	8				
Avg.	29	35	27	35	35	26	5

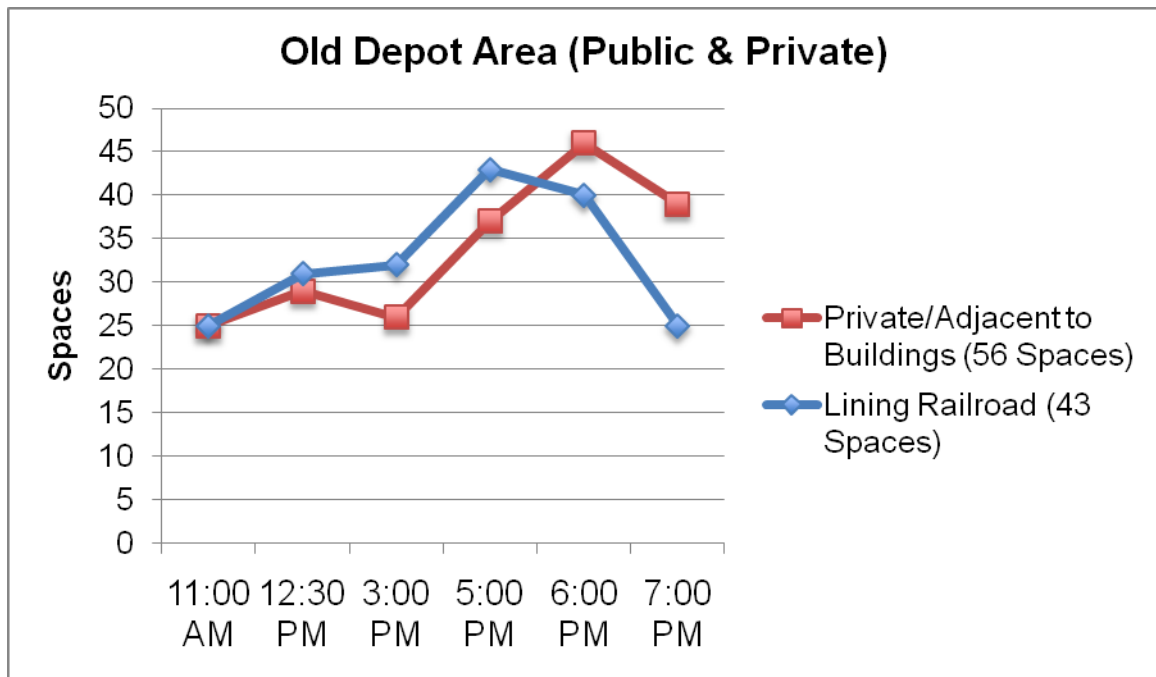
Matthews Station

	11:00 AM	12:30 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	
8-Jun-10	28		33				12
9-Jun-10	31		38				10
11-Jun-10	40		37				7
15-Jun-10		46	36				10
16-Jun-10		47	38				10
17-Jun-10		45	27				
22-Jun-10		47	27	40	46	36	
23-Jun-10		45	31	44	39	37	
24-Jun-10		41	28				
Avg.	33	45	32	42	43	37	10



Lot by Subway

	11:00 AM	12:30 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	
8-Jun-10	13		10				6
9-Jun-10	12		10				3
11-Jun-10	12		14				5
15-Jun-10		23	11				5
16-Jun-10		27	16				11
17-Jun-10		26	10				
22-Jun-10		20	13	21	29	26	
23-Jun-10		28	13	19	23	21	
24-Jun-10		16	5				
Avg.	12	23	11	20	26	24	6



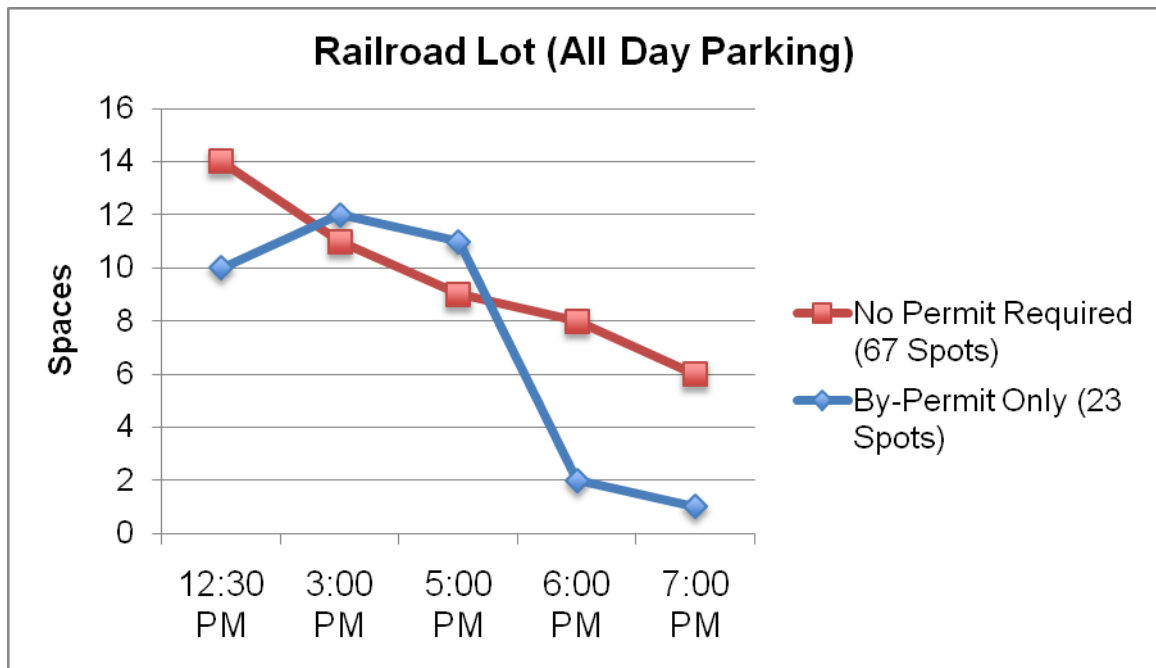
#### Private/Adjacent to Buildings

	11:00 AM	12:30 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM
8-Jun-10	28		30			
9-Jun-10	21		23			
11-Jun-10	27		26			
15-Jun-10		27	21			
16-Jun-10		33	33			
17-Jun-10		30	21			
22-Jun-10		27	25	35	48	43
23-Jun-10		33	29	39	43	35
24-Jun-10		21	23			
Avg.	25	29	26	37	46	39

# Lining Railroad

	11:00 AM	12:30 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM
8-Jun-10	23		28			
9-Jun-10	24		33			
11-Jun-10	29		29			
15-Jun-10		30	27			
16-Jun-10		40	39			
17-Jun-10		29	26			
22-Jun-10		32	34	43	42	26
23-Jun-10		33	36	42	37	24
24-Jun-10		24	32			
Avg.	25	31	32	43	40	25





#### By-Permit Only

	11:00 AM	12:30 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM
8-Jun-10						
9-Jun-10						
11-Jun-10						
15-Jun-10						
16-Jun-10						
17-Jun-10		10	9			
22-Jun-10		11	15	13	4	2
23-Jun-10		10	11	8	0	0
24-Jun-10		8	12			
Avg.		10	12	11	2	1

No Permit Required

	11:00 AM	12:30 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM
8-Jun-10						
9-Jun-10						
11-Jun-10						
15-Jun-10						
16-Jun-10						
17-Jun-10		17	13			
22-Jun-10		10	8	7	8	7
23-Jun-10		15	11	10	8	5
24-Jun-10		15	11			
Avg.		14	11	9	8	6